

third meeting an introductory address was read by Dr. Sigmond. After stating the objects of the Society, and the necessity there is for a garden within reach of those lovers of the works of Nature who are found for a great part of the year congregated within this vast metropolis, but who have hitherto been denied so great and healthful a luxury, the Doctor entered upon a historical review of the gardens of antiquity; he referred to both sacred and profane history to show, that whenever Man was painted in a situation of pure felicity and of virtue he was placed in one of these delightful spots: such were the gardens of Eden, of the Hesperides, of Adonis, of Alcinous. He then traced the history of gardens from Grecian and Roman authorities; and showed that our Saxon ancestors were repositories of botanical knowledge; he referred to the reigns of Henry the First, Henry the Third, Richard the Second, and Elizabeth, to show that the cultivation of flowers had always been carried on with singular avidity. The discovery of the New World, and the persecution which drove the Protestants from the Netherlands, gave a great impetus to botanical research in England. Charles the First created the place of Royal Herbalist. Gardens have been established in various parts of England, at Oxford, in 1632, at Chelsea, in 1673, &c.; but still a garden so near the metropolis as to serve as a school for the rising generation, and a source of recreation to all classes, has been long a desideratum.

[It is surely much to be wished that this Society should meet with due encouragement, as the greatly increasing number of those students in the medical schools and the colleges now established in the metropolis, and others, of whose studies and recreations Botany forms a part, makes a well-stocked garden in the immediate vicinity exceedingly desirable; and no spot could have been selected within the same distance so well adapted as the Inner Circle of the Regent's Park, or likely to retain its salubrious air so long unimpaired by surrounding buildings. A plan of the Garden is annexed to our present Number. Its attraction as a scene of healthy and delightful relaxation may well be made tributary to the interests of science in behalf of a numerous class whose opportunities of pursuing botanical studies at a greater distance from town must necessarily be much less frequent than a garden so readily accessible would afford.—R. T.]

MISCELLANEOUS.

A new species of the Australian genus *ALCYONE*.—It is thus characterized: *Alcyone ruficollaris*; plumage glossy green; upper parts and sides blue; under parts rufous; chin of a lighter red; a semicollar of rufous feathers on the nape of the neck. Wings short; third and fourth quills longest. Tail short. Bill black at the base, shaded to dark brown at the tip. Legs reddish-yellow. Claws of all the toes longitudinally furrowed. Seven inches in length from the tip of the bill to the extremity of the tail.

Habitat, mangrove trees, Port Essington. It is active, and so

wild, that it is with difficulty one can obtain proximity to it when disturbed in its avocations among the crooked roots of the mangroves.—R. A. BANKIER, Acting Surgeon, Port Essington.

Freshwater shells collected in Wexford.—As our catalogue of the land and freshwater shells of Ireland is far from complete, perhaps the following list of a few species, collected by myself in Wexford, may prove not unworthy of insertion in your valuable Magazine, as tending to show the distribution of species, and adding several to those mentioned by Mr. Gray in his excellent tabular arrangement of localities in Turton's Manual.

Limax maximus.
 Vitrina pellucida.
 Helix pulchella.
 — aculeata.
 — hispida.
 — virgata.
 Zonites rotundatus.
 — alliaris.
 Bulimus acutus.

Zua lubrica.
 Pupa umbilicata.
 Clausilia nigricans.
 Limnæus pereger.
 — truncatulus.
 Ancylus fluviatilis.
 Physa fontinalis.
 Variety figured 110* Gray's Manual.

SYLVANUS HANLEY.

Newington Green, November 30th, 1840.

Capture of some Rare Birds on the Cotswold Hills.—June 1839. I had sent me a male and female Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*), and, about three weeks afterwards, another female was killed. The pair would no doubt have bred here, had they not been destroyed. The female had nearly the whole inside of her mouth diseased, being covered with a tough leathery substance, of a pale colour, and which I had considerable difficulty in removing. This matter had begun to extend itself down the throat, where, however, it was less firm in its texture. The bird was thin.

The other birds obtained here, were three specimens of the Rough-legged Buzzard (*Buteo lagopus*); two were taken in December 1839, and the other in January 1840.

24th October, 1840, was shot, near Cheltenham, the Black Redstart (*Sylvia Tithys*).

In January 1840 the Fire-crested Wren was shot near Cheltenham (*S. ignicapilla*, Brehm.).

The last two birds are in the possession of N. Skelton, bird-preserver at Cheltenham.—J. BROWN.

Cotswold Hills, December 4, 1840.

Remarkable Habit in a Fish.—While at San Joaquim, on the Rio Bremeo, I was frequently warned by the inhabitants to be cautious while bathing of a small fish called *Cancliru*, which they said entered the urethra and rectum, chiefly if one, while in the water, should satisfy nature; that the greatest difficulty attended the extraction of this little fish, which often caused most dangerous inflammation, and even death. Although these accounts were given to me by persons whom I had no reason to disbelieve, I could not find any one who had been an eye-witness of such an uncommon event, and I